

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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P R 171730Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6408

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1730

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS: RURAL SCENE HEATS UP

REF: LISBON 1633 (DTG 121653Z MAR 76)

SUMMARY: COMMUNIST SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AGRARIAN REFORM VICTOR LOURO WAS SUSPENDED MARCH 16 FOR HIS INFLAMMATORY REMARKS TO RURAL WORKERS. AGRARIAN REFORM IS ALREADY ON THE DEFENSIVE, AND THE LOURO CONTROVERSY REPRESENTS ONE ADDITIONAL EMBARRASSMENT FOR SOCIALIST MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE LOPES CARDOSO. END SUMMARY.

1. LOURO SUSPENDED: PRIME MINISTER SUSPENDED PCP SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AGRARIAN REFORM VICTOR LOURO MARCH 16 PENDING A FULL INVESTIGATION OF CONTROVERSIAL
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REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM. PM NOTED THAT REVOLUTIONARY

COUNCIL HAD BEEN CONSULTED AND SOCIALIST MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE LOPES CARDOSO HAD PROPOSED SUSPENSION. SUSPENSION IS A RESULT OF LOURO'S MARCH 5 REMARKS TO GROUP OF TECHNICIANS AND RURAL WORKERS IN EVORA REPORTED REFTEL. COMMUNIST-CONTROLLED UNION OF RURAL WORKERS QUICKLY PROTESTED DECISION TO SUSPEND LOURO, AND PCP ISSUED STATEMENT COMPLAINING OF THE "CALUMNIOUS CAMPAIGN OF THE REACTION-ARY PRESS" AGAINST VICTOR LOURO.

2. SMALL FARMERS REACT TO LAND SEIZURES: SMALL FARMERS AND RENTERS OF CORUCHE IN SANTAREM PROVINCE THREATENED TO MARCH ON LISBON MARCH 18 TO DEMAND THE RETURN OF LAND WHICH WAS SEIZED BY UNIONS OF RURAL WORKERS IN THE COURSE OF AGRARIAN REFORM.

3. CDS ATTACKED IN EVORA: THE CDS DEMONSTRATED ITS INCREASING BOLDNESS IN THE TRADITIONALLY LEFTIST ALENTEJO FARM COUNTRY BY SETTING UP A BOOTH IN THE PRINCIPAL PLAZA OF EVORA MARCH 16. DESPITE EFFORTS OF POLICE, MILITARY POLICE, AND CIVIL GOVERNOR TO AVOID A CONFRONTATION, CLASHES RESULTED IN AT LEAST TWELVE MINOR INJURIES.

4. COMMENT: LOURO'S REMARKS WOULD HAVE GONE UNNOTICED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO. BUT, LISBON PRESS KEPT THE STORY ALIVE EVEN AFTER LOURO'S DENIAL. AGRARIAN REFORM IS ALREADY ON THE DEFENSIVE AND THE CONTROVERSY OVER LOURO IS ONE ADDITIONAL EMBARRASSMENT FOR LOPES CARDOSO.
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Message Attributes

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